

their vice. They are not accused, even by those whom they persecuted, of atrocious crime or of sinful life. Respectability compassed them about. They were many of them hardworking men, but they worked hard, not at the visitation of their dioceses and the supervision of their spiritual courts, but at the administration of the country and at the royal finance and diplomacy.

The method of appointment by the King rendered these characteristics inevitable. If the chapters of the cathedrals had been really free to elect whom they wished, the Bishops might have numbered among them men without experience or interests beyond the sphere of the Church. If, on the other hand, the Pope had been able to appoint his candidates, he would have filled the English Episcopate with Cardinals from the churches of Borne and Avignon. He was, indeed, able to thrust his foreigners into the next greatest places in the Church. But the King would not allow him to denationalise the episcopal bench itself. Not a single Bishop of the period bears a foreign name. But, although the Pope could not appoint whom he liked, no Bishop could be appointed without his consent and co-operation. Of those who filled English sees in 1381, all had either been chosen in accordance with Papal provision or bull, or had been afterwards confirmed *by* the Pope,¹ a process which was apparently considered essential to the validity of an election.²

This practice was in contradiction to the law of England. The Statute of Provisors had forbidden the interference of the Pope in the elections. But although the nation that welcomed the Act and the Parliament that passed it intended it to come into force, the King who consented to it had no such intention. Edward the Third, and Richard after him, found that the easiest way to obtain the high places of the Church for their servants and friends was to act in alliance with Rome in this one matter. The Pope sent his bull to support the royal candidates for benefices or bishoprics. In return the King allowed the Pope to appoint his Cardinals to other places in the English Church. Neither party felt strong

¹ I have tested every case. ¹ *E.g.* Moberly's *Life of Wykeham*, ed. 1893, pp. 61-72,